UNITED
NATIONS

A

General Assembly

Distr.
GENERAL

A/CONF.151/PC/100/Add.6
16 January 1992

ORIGINAL: ENGLISH

PREPARATORY COMMITTEE FOR THE UNITED
NATIONS CONFERENCE ON ENVIRONMENT
AND DEVELOPMENT
Fourth session
New York, 2 March-3 April 1992
Plenary session
Item 2 (c) of the provisional agenda*

PREPARATIONS FOR THE UNITED NATIONS CONFERENCE ON ENVIRONMENT AND DEVELOPMENT ON THE BASIS OF GENERAL ASSEMBLY RESOLUTION 44/228 AND TAKING INTO ACCOUNT OTHER RELEVANT GENERAL ASSEMBLY RESOLUTIONS: CROSS-SECTORAL ISSUES

Education, public awareness and training

(Section IV, Chapter 4 of Agenda 21)

Report of the Secretary-General of the Conference

I. INTRODUCTION

1. This text has been prepared in response to Preparatory Committee decision 3/8 (see A/46/48 (Part II), annex I) and takes into account the Chairman's summary of the discussion. Documents A/CONF.151/PC/21 and A/CONF.151/PC/55 were used as a basis for developing the proposals. The original mandate for this area is contained in General Assembly resolution 44/228, section I, paragraph 15 (s): "To promote environmental education, especially of the younger generation, as well as other measures to increase awareness of the value of the environment".

2. Education, raising of public awareness and training are linked to virtually all areas in Agenda 21, and even more closely to the ones on meeting basic needs, capacity building, data and information, science, and the role of

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* See A/CONF.151/PC/96.

major groups. This chapter sets out broad proposals, while specific suggestions related to sectoral issues are contained in other chapters.

3. Programme areas described in the present chapter are:

(a) Reorienting education towards sustainable development;

(b) Increasing public awareness;

(c) Promoting training.

II. REORIENTING EDUCATION TOWARDS SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT

Basis for action

4. Education is critical for promoting sustainable development and improving the capacity of countries to address environment and development issues. While basic education provides the underpinning for any environmental and development education, 1/ the latter needs to be recognized as an essential part of learning, including basic learning. It is indispensable for enabling people to adapt to a changing world. It is also critical for achieving ethical awareness and promoting behaviour consistent with the sustainable use of natural resources and sustainable development. To be effective, it should deal with both the dynamics of the physical/biological environment and human development, be integrated in all disciplines, and employ all formal and non-formal methods and adequate means of communication.

Objectives

5. The following objectives are proposed:

(a) By the year 2000, to ensure universal access to basic education, and to achieve primary education for at least 80 per cent of primary school-age children through formal schooling or non-formal education. To reduce the adult illiteracy rate to at least half of its 1990 level;

(b) To achieve environmental and development literacy, by 2000, of all sectors of society on a world-wide scale so that it becomes an essential and examinable part of the education of every student and a career incentive;

(c) To ensure by the end of this century the accessibility of environmental and development education, linked to social education, from primary school age to adulthood, as a lifelong experience, to all groups of people;

(d) To achieve an integrated approach to all environmental educational programmes, which encompasses the analysis of the local context of major environmental and development issues, drawing on the best available scientific evidence, identifying target audiences and methodologies and evaluating the results obtained.

Activities

6. All Governments should affirm or reaffirm their adherence to the World Declaration on Education for All adopted at the World Conference on Education for All: Meeting Basic Learning Needs (Jomtien, Thailand, 5-9 March 1990), and to its Framework for Action. This would encompass the preparation of national strategies and actions for meeting basic learning needs, universalizing access and promoting equity, broadening the means and scope of education, developing a supporting policy context, mobilizing resources and strengthening international cooperation to redress existing economic disparities which interfere with these aims.

7. Governments should prepare or update national strategies for environmental and development education within the next three years, which should set out policies and activities, identify needs, cost, means and schedules for their implementation, evaluation and review. A thorough review of curricula should be undertaken to ensure a multidisciplinary approach, with environment and development issues and their socio-cultural aspects and linkages integrated in all subjects and presented in a scientifically sound perspective.

8. Governments should set up advisory national environmental education coordinating bodies or round tables representative of various environmental, developmental, educational, gender and other interests, including non-governmental organizations, to encourage partnerships, help mobilize resources, and provide a source of information and focal point for international ties. These bodies would analyse the needs of national target audiences and non-specialist user groups, with special emphasis on decision makers, and establish means of effectively reaching them.

9. National educational authorities should assist or set up pre-service and in-service training programmes for all schoolteachers, administrators, and educational planners, as part of national and regional strategies, addressing the nature and methods of environmental and development education and making full use of relevant experience of non-governmental organizations.

10. National authorities should ensure that every school is assisted in designing environmental activity work plans, with the participation of students and staff, subject to regular audit. Schools should involve schoolchildren in local and regional ecosystems studies and in relevant activities, linking these with services and research in national parks, wildlife reserves, ecological heritage sites, etc. 2/

11. National and regional authorities and non-governmental organizations should promote the development of innovative interactive teaching methods in school classrooms, through distance learning, student to student teaching, electronic simulation computerized programmes, video, music, theatre, traditional media and other means.

12. The United Nations system should undertake a comprehensive review of its educational activities, encompassing training and public awareness,

reassessing priorities and reallocating resources, to ensure a coordinated environment and development education policy. With the International Environmental Education Programme (IEEP) continuing to provide the philosophy and lead, UNESCO and UNEP should set up within two years a programme to integrate the decisions of the Conference into the existing framework adapted to the needs of educators at different levels and circumstances. Regional organizations and national authorities should be assisted to elaborate parallel programmes within three to five years, in particular by conducting an analysis of target audiences and means of reaching them effectively. Studies and workshops should be undertaken to foster environmental ethics for different target groups in socio-cultural contexts.

13. UNESCO and UNEP with support from the International Union for the Conservation of Nature and Natural Resources (IUCN) should establish an international clearing-house of information, technologies and resources relevant to environmental and development education and public awareness within five years, in collaboration with the regional development banks, regional commissions, UNDP resident representatives, United Nations information centres, non-governmental organizations, data banks, and publishing houses. Regional clearing-houses could also be created. Developing countries should be assisted in preparing educational tools that expand on regional environment and development issues and initiatives, using learning materials and resources suited to their own requirements. The United Nations should improve the dissemination of existing materials, such as teaching modules, through the use of regional facilities and in a variety of languages. 3/

14. Governments and educational authorities should support university and other tertiary activities and networks for environmental and development education. Cross-disciplinary courses should be taken by all students likely to work in professions which impact upon the environment. Existing regional networks and activities and national university actions which promote research and common teaching approaches on sustainable development should be built upon, and new partnerships and bridges created with the business and other independent sectors, as well as with developing countries for technology, know-how and knowledge transfer. 4/

15. Governments, assisted by international organizations, should strengthen or establish national or regional centres of environmental and development excellence in interdisciplinary research and education in environmental sciences, law and the management of specific environmental problems - universities or existing networks in each country or region, promoting cooperative research and information sharing and dissemination. At the global level these functions should be performed by institutions such as the United Nations University, the International Academy of the Environment in Geneva and the proposed UNEP world environment academy.

16. Promotion of non-formal education activities at the regional and national level: the United Nations system through the UNESCO/UNEP IEEP should encourage the development of an international network to cooperate with non-governmental organizations for the achievement of global educational aims,

in order to forge stronger links with business, industry, labour unions, indigenous people, women, religious and other groups. 5/ At the national and local level, public and scholastic forums should be established for the discussion of environmental issues, suggesting alternatives to policy makers.

17. Educational authorities and non-governmental organizations should promote all kinds of adult education programmes for continuing education in environment and development, basing activities around elementary/secondary schools and local problems. These authorities and industry should encourage business and industrial and agricultural schools to include such topics in their curricula.

18. Governments and educational authorities should provide more opportunities for women by redressing gender stereotyping in the national curricula, improving enrolment opportunities, including them in advanced programmes as students and instructors, reforming entrance and teacher staffing policies and providing incentives by establishing child care facilities. Priority should be given to educating of young females. 6/

19. Governments should affirm the rights of indigenous peoples, by legislation if necessary, to use their experience and understanding of environmental determinants to play a part in education and training related to them and others. 7/

20. The United Nations should maintain a monitoring and evaluative role regarding decisions of the Conference on education and awareness, through a biennial register of national needs and progress. With Governments and non-governmental organizations it should present and disseminate decisions in a variety of forms, and ensure the continuous implementation and review of the educational implications of Conference decisions, in particular through relevant events and conferences. 8/

Means of implementation 9/

21. Total financing required for basic education is $7 to $8 billion per annum, of which $3 to $4 billion is needed from the international community. For environmental and development education total costs are around $1 billion including about $500 million to be obtained from the international community; $10 million would be required for strengthening international institutions.

III. INCREASING PUBLIC AWARENESS

Basis for action

22. There is still a considerable lack of awareness of the interrelated nature of all human activities and the environment, due to inaccurate or insufficient information, access, targeting, or use of the modern communication and media potential. Developing countries in particular lack relevant technologies and expertise. There is a need to increase public

sensitivity to environment and development problems, a sense of personal responsibility and involvement in their solution, especially at the local and grass-roots level, and greater motivation and commitment towards environmental quality.

Objective

23. The following objective is proposed: to establish a broad public awareness campaign as an essential part of a global education effort to strengthen attitudes and values rewarding environmental competence, sustainable consumption patterns and lifestyles, and leading to positive action.

Activities

24. Governments should establish national focal points or small coordination units at high levels to act as catalysts and clearing-houses for public environment and development information, and to coordinate activities with, among others, the United Nations, non-governmental organizations and media. They should encourage public awareness involvement and engage all layers of the national administration in a discussion of environmental policies and assessments, with parliamentary and public policy hearings providing a useful role.

25. The United Nations system should improve its channels of outreach in the course of a review of its education and public awareness activities to promote greater involvement and coordination of all parts of the system, especially its information bodies and regional and country operations. Systematic surveys of the impact of awareness campaigns should be conducted.

26. Governments and regional organizations should provide public environmental information services, centrally and locally, support data banks and encourage openness, information sharing, accessibility and rapid communication of accurate updated information for raising the awareness of all groups, particularly decision makers and the private sector. Multi-authored popular synthesis educational materials in easily understandable forms. Specialized interpretation and dissemination services set up, using the UNDP Sustainable Development Network and other relevant networks, including those established by non-governmental organizations. 10/

27. Governments should stimulate educational establishments, especially the tertiary sector, to contribute more to awareness building. Education materials of all kinds and for all audiences should be based on the best available scientific information, including both the natural and behavioural and social sciences, taking into account the aesthetic and ethical dimensions. 11/

28. Governments and the United Nations system should forge a cooperative relationship with the media, entertainment and advertising industries by initiating discussions to mobilize their useful role and experience in shaping public behaviour and consumption patterns and making wide use of their

methods. UNICEF should develop children-oriented material for media as an educational tool, ensuring close cooperation between the out-of-school public information sector and the school curriculum, from the primary level. UNESCO, UNEP and universities should enrich pre-service curricula for journalists on environment and development topics.

29. Governments, in cooperation with the scientific community, should establish ways of employing modern communication technologies to ensure that they reach out rapidly to all sectors of the population in new and effective ways. National educational authorities, and relevant United Nations agencies should expand the use of audio-visual methods, especially in rural areas, in mobile units, by producing television and radio spots for developing countries, involving local participation, employing interactive multimedia methods 12/ and integrating advanced methods with folk media.

30. Governments should support environment-related leisure and tourism activities, building on The Hague Declaration of Tourism (1989) and the current programmes of the World Tourism Organization and UNEP. They should promote sustainable tourism development, making full use of museums, heritage sites, zoos, botanical gardens, national parks and protected areas.

31. Non-governmental organizations should increase their involvement in achieving a societal consensus on environmental and development problems, through joint awareness initiatives and improved interchange with Governments, industry, science, trade unions, religious groups, media and consumers and between themselves. 13/ They should help integrate new cultural perspectives into scientific research priorities and facilitate communication with professional sources, especially in deprived rural and urban areas, and devise ways of giving recognition to successful activities. Portable educational kits and interactive games should be developed to suit local needs, using domestic sources, combined with electronic means. Field and collaborative programmes, such as student exchange, the United Nations Volunteers/UNDP Youth Environment Corps should be supported and intercommunity cooperation and experience sharing encouraged especially between sister cities and local authorities.

32. Governments and the United Nations system should increase their interaction with and encourage respect for less formal bodies of knowledge by involving indigenous people in the management, planning and development of their local environment, and promoting dissemination of traditional and socially learned knowledge through means based on local customs, especially in rural areas, integrating these efforts with the electronic media, whenever appropriate. 14/

33. UNICEF, UNESCO, UNDP and non-governmental organizations should develop support programmes to involve young people and children in environment and development issues, such as children's and youth hearings, building on decisions of the World Summit for Children. 15/

34. Governments, the United Nations and non-governmental organizations should encourage mobilization of women's groups in awareness campaigns, stressing the

role of the family in environmental activities, and women's contribution to transmission of knowledge and social values and in the development of human resources. 16/

35. Governments should raise the awareness of the population of the environmental impact of military activities, including the awareness of their armed forces, by involving them in conservation, tree-planting and other local action.

Means of implementation 17/

36. Total financing required to implement these activities would be around $1.2 billion per annum, including $100 million to be obtained from the international community; $10 million are needed for strengthening international institutions.

IV. PROMOTING TRAINING

Basis for action

37. Training is one of the most important tools to develop human resources and facilitate the transition to a more sustainable world. It should have a job-specific focus, aimed at filling gaps in knowledge and skill that would help individuals find employment and be involved in environmental and development work. At the same time, training programmes should promote a greater awareness of environment and development issues as a two-way learning process.

Objectives

38. The following objectives are proposed:

(a) To establish or strengthen vocational training programmes that meet the needs of environment and development with ensured access to training opportunities, regardless of gender, race or religion;

(b) To create a flexible and adaptable workforce of various ages equipped to meet growing environmental problems and changes arising from structural adjustment;

(c) To strengthen national capacities to enable Governments', employers' and workers' organizations to meet their environmental and development objectives and to facilitate the transfer of new environmentally and socially sound and appropriate technology;

(d) To ensure that environmental and human ecology considerations are integrated at all managerial levels and in all functional management areas, such as marketing, production and finance.

Activities

39. Governments with the support of the United Nations system should identify national manpower and training needs and assess measures to be taken to meet those needs. A review of progress in this area could be undertaken by the United Nations system in 1995.

40. Governments and educational institutions should integrate environmental and developmental issues into existing training curricula and promote the exchange of training curricula, methodologies and evaluations.

41. Governments should ensure that all sectors of society, such as industry, and universities, include an environmental management component in all relevant training activities, with emphasis on meeting immediate skill requirements through short-term formal and in-plant vocational and management training. 18/ Environmental management training capacities should be strengthened, and specialized "training of trainers" programmes should be established to support training at the national and enterprise levels. New training approaches for existing environmentally sound practices should be developed that create employment opportunities and make maximum use of local resource-based methods.

42. Governments should strengthen or establish practical training programmes for graduates from vocational schools, high schools and universities, particularly in developing countries, to enable them to meet labour market requirements and to achieve sustainable livelihoods. Training and retraining programmes should be established to meet structural adjustments which have an impact on employment and skill qualifications. 19/

43. Governments should provide training to the following specific population groups, enabling them to make a greater contribution to sustainable development: women, early school-leavers, migrant workers, refugees, indigenous peoples and groups of workers in urban and rural areas 20/ who are hard to reach.

44. Governments, industry, trade unions, and consumers should promote an understanding of the interrelationship between good environment and good business practices. Employers and workers and their organizations should be involved in drafting relevant legislation, providing a clearing-house regarding the choice of environment and development technologies, and maintaining a network for the exchange of information and training programmes on measures affecting occupational safety, health and environment as well as employment and career development opportunities. 21/

45. Governments and non-governmental organizations should develop a service of locally trained and recruited environmental technicians able to provide local people and communities, particularly in deprived urban and rural areas, with the services they require, starting from primary environmental care. 22/

46. Governments, universities and industry should enhance the ability to access, analyse and effectively use information and knowledge available on environment and development. 23/ Existing or established special training programmes should be strengthened to support information needs of special groups, including employers' organizations, trade unions, rural workers' organizations and non-governmental organizations, and evaluate the impact of these programmes on productivity, health, safety and employment. National and regional environmental labour-market information systems should be developed that would supply, on a continuing basis, data on environmental job and training opportunities. Environment and development training resource-guides should be prepared and updated, with information on training programmes, curricula, methodologies and evaluation results at the national, regional, and international levels.

47. Aid agencies should strengthen the training component in all development projects, emphasizing a multi-disciplinary approach, promoting awareness and providing the necessary skills. The environmental management guidelines of UNDP for operational activities of the United Nations system, for example, may contribute to this end.

48. Existing networks of employers' and workers' organizations, industry associations and non-governmental organizations should facilitate the exchange of experience concerning training and awareness programmes.

49. Governments with the help of the United Nations system (UNITAR) and intergovernmental organizations and non-governmental organizations should provide training in conducting environment/development negotiations and in implementing international environmental policy instruments.

50. Governments should implement human resource development strategies to deal with global environmental threats and national and regional environment and development problems and emergencies, emphasizing urgent practical training and awareness programmes for increasing public preparedness.

51. ILO should extend its training programmes, particularly its environmental training and support activities for employers' and workers' organizations, UNESCO, UNEP, FAO, UNDP, WHO, UNIDO, UNITAR, IUCN, and others.

Means of implementation 24/

52. Total financing required to implement these activities would be $5 billion per annum, including $2 billion to be obtained from international sources. Strengthening international institutions would require about $30 million.

Notes

1/ See A/CONF.151/PC/55 for more detail. Basic education has been strongly supported by the World Conference on Education for All (Jomtien, 1990) and the World Summit for Children (New York, 1990). See also chapter on "Combating poverty and meeting basic needs" (A/CONF.151/PC/100/Add.2).

2/ See chapter on "Strengthening the role of youth" (A/CONF.151/PC/100/Add.13, sect. II). The Associated Schools of UNESCO could be involved in these activities.

3/ See also chapter on "Information for decision making" (A/CONF.151/100/Add.12).

4/ The Talloires Declaration of University Presidents is one initiative. Existing networks such as "Copernicus", launched by the Conference of Rectors of European Universities (CRE), and the French-speaking University network (UREF) are examples of effective actions in the area. See also chapters on "Transfer of environmentally sound technology", "Science for sustainable development" and "Scientific and technological community" (A/CONF.151/PC/100/Add.9, 10 and 13, sect. VIII).

5/ See section on "Strengthening the role of major groups" (A/CONF.151/PC/100/Add.13).

6/ See chapter on "Women" (ibid., sect. I).

7/ See chapter on "Indigenous people" (ibid., sect. III).

8/ Several events are being planned, such as the World Congress on Education and Communication for Environment and Development (October 1992, Toronto), sponsored by UNESCO and ICC, the European Conference on Cooperation and Communication in the Field of Environmental Education (1992, Netherlands), and the Global Forum on Environmental and Development Education (September 1993, India).

9/ More support for education, training and public awareness activities related to environment and development could be provided in particular, through the following measures:

(a) Give higher priority to those sectors in budget allocations, protecting them from structural cutting requirements;

(b) Shift allocations within existing education budgets in favour of primary education, with focus on environment and development;

(c) Promote conditions where a larger share of the cost is borne by local communities, with rich communities assisting poorer ones;

(d) Obtain additional funds from private donors concentrating on the poorest countries, and those with rates of literacy below 40 per cent;

Notes (continued)

(e) Encourage debt for education swaps;

(f) Lift restrictions on private schooling and increase the flow of funds from and to non-governmental organizations, including small-scale grass-roots organizations;

(g) Promote the effective use of existing facilities, for example multiple school shifts, fuller development of open universities and other long-distance teaching;

(h) Facilitate low or no cost use of mass media for education purposes;

(i) Encourage twinning of universities in developed and developing countries.

The total requirement for primary education for all children was estimated at the World Conference on Education for All to be an additional $5 to $6 billion annually in local and international resources. Another $2 billion will be required for literacy training for adult women. By restructuring priorities, greater efficiency, cost recovery, etc. $3.5 to $4 billion might be obtained. Aid donors would be asked to contribute the shortfall, that is $3.5 to $4 billion.

It is more difficult to estimate the costs of environmental and development education, not the least due to its integrative nature. For the primary and secondary level total additional cost can be estimated as $500 million and $200 million. The tertiary level might require $300 million.

10/ See also chapter "Information for decision-making" (A/CONF.151/PC/100/Add.12).

11/ See chapters on "Science for sustainable development" and "Scientific and technological community" (A/CONF.151/PC/100/Add.10 and 13, sect. VIII).

12/ A flexible mixture of text, image and sound.

13/ See section on "Strengthening the role of major groups" (A/CONF.151/PC/100/Add.13).

14/ See chapter on "Indigenous people" (A/CONF.151/PC/100/Add.13, sect. III). The "Earth Restoration Corps" activities is one example that could be encouraged.

15/ See chapter on "Youth" (A/CONF.151/PC/100/Add.13, sect. II). The Environmental Youth Alliance is an example of a successful youth network.

16/ See chapter on "Women" (A/CONF.151/PC/100/Add.13, sect. I).

Notes (continued)

17/ The area of awareness building is extremely difficult to cost as a total. Some examples are available, which provide general guidance. Thus, UNEP allocations for public information activities. See also chapter on "National mechanisms and international cooperation for capacity building" (A/CONF.151/PC/100/Add.11).

18/ See chapter on "Strengthening the role of business and industry" (A/CONF.151/PC/100/Add.13, sect. VII).

19/ See chapters on "Science for sustainable development" and "Youth" (A/CONF.151/PC/100/Add.10 and Add.13, sect. II).

20/ See section on "Strengthening the role of major groups" (A/CONF.151/PC/100/Add.13).

21/ This action could build on the Final Declaration of the World Industry Conference on Environmental Management - WICEM II (April 1991, Netherlands). See chapters on "Business and industry" and "Protection and promotion of human health" (A/CONF.151/PC/100/Add.13, sect. VII and Add.5).

22/ See chapters on "National mechanisms and international cooperation for capacity building" and "Non-governmental organizations" (A/CONF.151/PC/100/Add.11 and Add.13, sect. IV).

23/ See chapter on "Information for decision-making" (A/CONF.151/PC/100/Add.12).

24/ A larger and fixed share of all development project funding could be earmarked for training. Donor aid could be tied to local projects and national institutions, to combat the brain-drain in developing countries.

Formal training costs are usually difficult to estimate. Informal, in-plant training are even more, and these have not been taken into account. Estimated total costs for training are $5 billion. $30 million for strengthening international institutions constitute 0.6 per cent of total costs.